

Office for Foreign Affairs, October 13, 1785

OFFICE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, OCTOBER 13, 1785.

The Secretary of the United States for the Department of Foreign Affairs, to whom was referred back his Report of the 19th ult. respecting Consuls, accompanied with a Motion of the same date;

REPORTS, THAT agreeable to what he conceives to be the design of this re-reference, he has endeavoured to contract the plan contained in that report, and to adapt it more immediately to our present circumstances.

Viewing the subject in that point of light, he is of opinion, that it would be expedient to vest the minister of the United States at the Court of Madrid, with the powers of a Consul-General, for Spain and their adjacent Islands, viz. the *Canaries*, and *those* in the Mediterranean; and that the Charge des Affaires there, be authorised to exercise those powers for the present.

That Consuls should be appointed to reside at Bilboa, Cadiz, Malaga, Alicant and Barcelona. That their jurisdictions be so extended and ascertained, as that every port in the kingdom be comprehended within one or other of the five consulates. That a consul be also appointed for the Canaries, to reside at *Teneriss*.

That it would be expedient to send a resident to Portugal, to give him an adequate salary, which your Secretary thinks would be about one thousand pounds sterling, a year, and to vest him with the powers of a Consul-General for that kingdom, and for the Madeiras.

That one consul should be appointed for Portugal, to reside at *Lisbon*, and one for the Madeiras, to reside at *Madeira*.

Library of Congress

That until all questions relative to the convention with France, now under the consideration of Congress shall be settled; it would be expedient to postpone all other measures respecting Consuls for that kingdom.

That it would be expedient to vest the minister of the United States at the Hague, with the powers of a Consul-General; and that one Consul for the United Netherlands be appointed to reside at *Amsterdam*.

That it would be expedient to vest the minister of the United States at the Court of London with the powers of a Consul-General for Britain and her adjacent Islands; but as the government of that country is administered according to fixed laws, which as well as their language and customs are well known to the people of America, your Secretary thinks there can be but little use for Consuls in any of their ports, at least before we have a treaty of commerce with them. But least he should be mistaken in this opinion, and that Consuls would *now* be useful; he is inclined to think it would be sufficient to place them at *London* and *Bristol*, in England, and at *Dublin* and *Cork*, in Ireland—as to Scotland, he cannot judge whether any should be sent there, or if any, to what ports in preference to others—the far greater part of the Americans trade to Scotland, being carried on in British vessels.

Whether the present commerce of the United States, with the northern powers, with Germany and the easterly shores, and the islands of the Mediterranean, calls for Consuls immediately; your Secretary cannot determine with certainty, he rather thinks they may at present be dispensed with. He ought, however, to observe that we have a treaty of commerce with Sweden, that they have a Consul here, and that from his accounts, our trade is remarkably favoured there.

Your Secretary for the reasons stated in his report, is of opinion, that the beforementioned Consuls should have no salaries, but should be permitted to trade. As to fees, he can readily suppose, that in *certain cases*, it would be proper to provide for and ascertain them; but as he doubts the present power of Congress to charge either vessels or persons with

Library of Congress

the payment of them, he thinks it would be prudent in all cases to prohibit the Consuls from demanding or receiving any fees or perquisites.

Your Secretary, from regard to that subordination which ought to be observed in every department, thinks that the Consuls-General should have power to suspend for good cause, any Consul within their respective jurisdiction, and to appoint another to fill his place until the pleasure of Congress be known, to whom the Consul-General should immediately give notice of such suspension and of his reasons for it.

Your Secretary is further of opinion, that the Consuls-General should be so strictly restrained from commerce, as that on due proof made of their being either directly or indirectly concerned in it, they should be dismissed from the service of Congress.

All which is submitted to the wisdom of Congress. **JOHN JAY.**